Company Intelligence Support Teams

by Major Rod Morgan

"Units must resource S2 sections down to the company level," Major General Jeffery Hammond, commander of the 4th Infantry Division, makes clear his vision and intent for operations during deployment in his memorandum, "How We Fight." In this document, he states several times that his "subordinates will have a 70 to 90 percent read of the enemy prior to conducting any patrol."

Currently across the Army, these company S2 sections exist by a multitude of names; some are referred to as the "company intel cell," "company exploitation cell," "company S2 section," or "company intel support team." For the purposes of this article, we will use the company intel support team. Just as there is no established title for this team, there is also no unified training or doctrine available, nor is there an established manning and materiel formula.

The time has come to establish a standard for company-level intelligence sections that can drive bottom-up intelligence. These company intelligence teams deserve the same level of care, thought, and resourcing as that of the company combat recovery team or the company master gunner. These teams are required to provide many functions for the commander, thus the key to their success is not just resourcing them, but resourcing them with the right soldiers and leaders.

The Company Intel Support Team Mission

In today's full spectrum combat environment, the company commander cannot perform intelligence analysis and fusion alone at his level. As the Army maintains its focus on counterinsurgency and "every soldier is a sensor," a commander can quickly become overwhelmed with the daily data he must sift through for relevance. Weapons intelligence (WIT) reports, patrol debriefs, intelligence summaries (INTSUMS), link diagrams, and be-on-the-look-out (BOLO) lists are just a few examples of the hundreds of important documents that compete for a commander's time.

As combat-arms leaders, we heavily rely on our subject-matter experts. For example, company commanders need to understand weapons capabilities and range operations, but the company's master gunner is the unit's expert in this field just as the company intel team noncommissioned officer should be the commander's expert on matters of intelligence.

The Marine Corps jumped out ahead of its sister service by publishing a manual that outlined doctrine for company intel support teams in December 2004. Moreover, the manual points out that the intel support team is not a new concept, regardless of how foreign it may now seem. According to U.S. Marine Corps X-File 2-1.1, *Company Intelligence Cell in Stability and Support Operations (SASO)*, "The mission of the company intel cell is to describe the effects of the weather, enemy, terrain, and local population upon friendly operations in order to reduce the commander's uncertainty and aid in his decision making."[1]

This is a simple and clear mission statement with a powerful purpose. Working with this mission statement as a starting point, we can extrapolate the specified and implied tasks that must be accomplished by the intel support team to achieve its purpose.

The Company Intel Support Team Functions

The company intel support team must be able to manage five functions to aid in the commander's decisionmaking. These functions follow a logical cycle:

Manage the company's lethal and non-lethal targeting. At the company level, targeting is the overall synthesis of all sources of available intelligence — battalion and sister-company INTSUMs, link diagrams, events pattern analysis (indirect fire, sniper, improvised explosive device), terrain analysis, BOLO lists, and most importantly, patrol debriefs. This continuous data fusion helps create a running situation template (SITTEMP) of the unit's operational environment. The intel support team takes this data and works with the commander to further develop targets and identify gaps in the current intelligence picture.

Supervise the company's intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) program. Based on the commander's guidance regarding particular targets, the intel support team develops collection specific information requirements (SIR) and an ISR collection matrix. This may require the intel support team to request battalion or higher level assets, task the company's unmanned aerial vehicle team, or work with the commander to task organic patrols to gather required information through observation or tactical questioning.

Manage the patrol prebrief/debrief process for the company. The patrol prebrief is not to be confused with the patrol order given by the patrol leader. The prebrief is generally given by a member of the intel support team to the patrol leader prior to departing the forward operating base (FOB), combat out post (COP), or joint security site (JSS). The prebrief is perhaps the most important function of the intel support team. During this brief, the team shares events that occurred in the operating environment over the

past 12 to 24 hours; route status; ISR collection assets in use throughout the battalion's operating environment; SIR tasked to answer; other units operating within the operating environment; BOLO lists; applicable target packets; and predictive analysis based on analysis during the targeting phase.

The debrief, when based on a solid prebrief, feeds the intel support team with data to continue their intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) and ultimately help begin the next targeting cycle for the company. The debrief should provide feedback on all areas covered in the prebrief, as well as provide updated pictures, and may also include data from detainee operations and tactical site exploitation.

Detainee operations. Detainee operations for the intel support team are two-fold: to ensure departing patrol units are armed with complete detainee packets and the knowledge to properly complete the forms and use the equipment; and maintain detainee packet data, copies of complete packets, and track current location and status of the company's detainees.

Tactical site exploitation. This function is similar to detainee operations; in that, the intel support team must ensure units depart on patrol trained and equipped with the proper tactical site exploitation paperwork and equipment. Upon completion of patrol and following debriefs, the intel support team sorts through photos collected, downloads biometric data, and manages databases. It is here that the intel support team once again begins its

data synthesis to update its targeting, thus beginning the cycle again.

Manning and Materiel

To accomplish its mission, the intel support team should be resourced with one officer, one noncommissioned officer, and two trained soldiers, which allows the cell to be manned for 24-hour operations and continuous supervision. Intel support team soldiers should be skilled and motivated; and not be part of the command post crew.

To effectively perform its functions, the intel support team should be equipped with dedicated computers and access to communications. The intel support team can function on two computers, but ideally, would be resourced with three: one for biometrics (if allocated); one for mapping, personality and event linkage, and event-trend analysis; and one for prebriefs and debriefs via tactical ground reporting network (TiGRNET), if available. Currently, the Army resources mapping through Falcon View, a mapping application; personality linkage through Analyst Notebook, an analyst development tool; and event linkage through Crystal software application. However, units are currently fielding newer, updated software, such as Axis-Pro.

The intel support team must stay current on all operations and should be collocated with the company command post, which allows them to communicate directly with the battalion S2, as well as units on patrol. Further, their proximity to radios increases their situational awareness. Again, to maintain continued intelligence collection and analysis, do not use the intel support team to run the command post.

Trends at the National Training Center

During the past 6 months of rotations at the National Training Center (NTC), five major trends affecting the intel support team have been revealed: poor vertical and horizontal communications; lack of nesting intelligence timelines and efforts; lack of information processing; continuous personnel turnover; and lack of soldier and leader training.

Two of these trends are issues that one expects any training unit to experience — poor ver-

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tical and horizontal communications and lack of nesting intelligence timelines and efforts are common, but also easily remedied. Through the course of NTC rotations, units normally improve their tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) and standard operating procedures (SOP) regarding these two trends, and by the end of the rotation, they have greatly refined their systems prior to deployment.

Unfortunately, the remaining three trends are not as easily fixed because they are core problems that involve fundamental individual training. It is these three trends that are crux of the issue:

Lack of information analysis. During recent rotations at the NTC, intel support teams hit and miss on their ability to process data. While a few teams have done exceptionally well, the majority have processed little to no analysis on incoming data as it is received. We also see a trend of intel support teams who receive large amounts of information they do not process. For example, an intel support team may not update patterns, IPB, link diagrams, and patrol prebriefs as data is received. This failure is generally tied to intel support teams being tasked to perform the duties of the company command post in addition to their appointed tasks, which appears to be directly correlated to the next trend.

Continuous personnel turnover. The intel support teams are primarily manned from one of three pools in a company: the fire support team, chemical personnel, or combat arms headquarters section personnel. While some companies deploy to combat fully manned with low-density MOS personnel, the majority of units rotating through the NTC do not, which results in intel support teams being pulled primarily from combat platoons. Just as maintaining qualified squad and vehicle crew integrity during deployment often takes divine intervention, personnel in headquarters companies often shift with necessity as well — a Bradley gunner slot may become vacant or a squad may need a rifleman for a patrol. Personnel management of combat-series soldiers is dynamic at the very least, which greatly affects the intel support teams that are manned by these soldiers. For example, the intel support team member who received home-station training prior to deployment will not likely fill that role during deployment.

Lack of soldier and leader training. Perhaps the most important trend issue is a lack of training, which at the soldier level is either a direct result of personnel

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turnover or a lack of training opportunities. At the leader level, this stems from a lack of training — fire supports officers (the defacto OIC of the intel support team) are not trained prior to assuming their responsibilities. Further, commanders are receiving minimal guidance on the intel support team's functions and resourcing; bottom line: a lack of soldier and leader training sets the stage for commanders to shoulder a large amount of the work expected from intel support teams.

Where We Go From Here

Intelligence-driven operations have become the cornerstone of how the Army conducts its business. Senior tactical commanders are requiring more of their subordinates to establish company intelligence support teams. We understand the mission of the intel support team, we understand its function, and we know how it must be resourced; however, its success in combat will be limited just as it was at the NTC. The secret to its success is training the correct personnel for the job.

To meet the intent of a growing number of division commanders, the Army must realign its manning requirement at the company level. There are several recommendations for intel support team manning and training; however, the recommendations below may be a solution:

Captains. There must be a change in the program of instruction (POI) used in maneuver captain career courses to put a greater emphasis on intelligence-driven operations, which includes, at a mini-

mum, an increased focus on the IPB process. Further, students should receive instruction on how to establish and maintain an intel support team.

Lieutenants. As fire support officers are frequently assigned the job of intel support team OIC, the Field Artillery Officer Basic Course POI should include IPB, ISR synchronization, tactical site exploitation, and detainee handling. Further, creating an intel support team leader course for lieutenants to attend following their OBC would continue to cross-pollinate the combined-arms team.

Enlisted. To prevent personnel turnover at the core of the intel support team, the section must consist of specialized soldiers; just as master gunners and medics, intel support team personnel must be specialized. Understanding that battalions are not always fully manned with analysts, it is unrealistic to recommend placing these low-density MOS soldiers at the company level. However, many installations and divisions are now running their own intel support team courses for non-intel soldiers, so the Army should capitalize on this thought process by creating a one-station unit training (OSUT) follow-on course for future intel support team members. This additional training assists the gaining unit twofold: it allows new soldiers to maximize collective training time with their section, as opposed to being absent for individual training during field exercises; and it awards soldiers a

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specialized skill identifier, allowing intel support team trained soldiers to fill slots in a specialized job.

Noncommissioned officers (NCOs). These senior soldiers are the backbone of this concept and they must master the functions required to achieve the purpose of the intel support team's mission statement. Thus, the training for the NCO must be rigorous and the admission process selective. Ideally, the intel support team NCO would be an intelligent staff sergeant from the combat-arms branch. Once the NCO completes the intel support team NCO course, he would be locked into his position, much like that of a company master gunner. However, the intel support team NCO career path is only through the company level, thus selected sergeants would not serve repeat assignments in this position.

The requirement for company intel support teams will not soon go away. Our Army's most current published doctrine, U.S. Army Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, is deeply rooted in intelligence-driven operations, particularly at the lowest levels.[2] Just as our Army is finding success in moving from larger collective FOBs to smaller JSSs, it must reinforce this success by continuing to push the right assets and training to the lowest possible levels. As commanders give directives for meeting the fundamentals of counterinsurgencies through intel support teams, the Army should match this guidance with updated oversight in training and management.

Notes

[1]Headquarters, Department of the Navy, U.S. Marine Corps X-File 2-1.1, *Company Intelligence Cell in Stability and Support Operations (SASO)*, GPO, Washington, DC, 17 December 2004.

[2]Headquarters, Department of the Army, U.S. Army Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO), Washington, DC, December 2006.

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